

**Report of Director Communities and Environment  
Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Subject: Update on implementation of Council resolution on the phase out of single use plastics**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes   x <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes   x <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	x <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes   x <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. This report provides a mid-point update to Executive Board on the implementation of the Council resolution to phase out single-use plastics by the Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019.
2. The resolution commits the Council to:
  - Phase out the use of single use plastics by this Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019, and ensure that any single use plastics still in use because of existing contracts have a definite end date for their use.
  - End the sale and provision of single use plastic products, such as bottles, cups, cutlery, drinking straws and food containers, in council buildings.
  - Investigate the possibility of requiring pop-up food and drink vendors at Council events to avoid single use plastics as a condition of their contract.
  - Work with tenants and operators in commercial properties owned by this Council to support the phasing out of single use plastic cups, bottles, cutlery, straws and food containers.
  - Work with event organisers to create policy in which single use disposable plastic cups and glasses are replaced at all city events with reusable or deposit scheme cups and glasses, and that single use plastic food containers are not provided.
  - Investigate what more the Council can do to ensure it recycles more plastic and provides opportunities for businesses and the public to recycle plastic.

- Bring a report to the Executive Board within 6 months highlighting the progress made.
3. The landscape on this issue has continued to shift at an internal and national level since the resolution was passed in September 2018. Significantly, a new 'Resources and Waste Strategy for England' has been published with reform of the whole packaging industry the first priority for change. Locally, organisations are increasingly pledging action in response to growing consumer demand. These and other welcome developments lend support for the work within the Council to eliminate the presence of single use plastics.
  4. Work has been ongoing through a cross-Council group of officers meeting since September 2018 to implement the Council resolution to phase out single use plastics. There has been real progress through that, with practical changes already implemented as a result of the resolution.
  5. The work to date has identified several risks, especially in working to a timeframe of December 2019. Other organisations nationally and locally have pledged to take action to phase out single use plastics, but are working to a longer timeframe and can therefore benefit from market developments in suitable alternatives. It will be important for work within the Council to continue with a clear eye on both costs and benefits, including those beyond environmental benefits alone. It is for this reason that a phased approach is recommended, with an initial focus on single use plastics associated with the consumption of food and drink.
  6. These issues will also be addressed in the revised Waste Strategy for Leeds which is expected to be considered by the Executive Board in Summer 2019, and through the Council's responses to the current Government consultations on measures to reduce packaging waste which follow on from the recently published Resources and Waste Strategy for England.

## **Recommendations**

Executive Board are asked to note the work and progress in implementing the Council resolution to phase out single-use plastics by the Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019.

Executive Board are asked to endorse the continuation of a pragmatic and phased approach on the reduction of single use plastics, as outlined in section 3.9.11 of this report.

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a mid-point update to Executive Board on the implementation of the Council resolution to phase out single-use plastics by the Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019.

## 2. Background information

- 2.1 The interest in the general availability, use and disposal of single-use plastics has gained significant momentum worldwide and shows no sign of abating. The focus of the concern has been the sheer quantity of plastic that ends up in the world's oceans, through the reality of a 'make, use once and throw' approach to every day plastic items.
- 2.2 The growing level of concern increases the demand for both sound leadership and action on this issue at an international, national and local level. Announcements and launches of pacts, commitments and new collaborations to tackle this issue are made almost monthly, with expectations and ideology continuing to shift quickly in the UK.
- 2.3 There is a growing desire for change within Leeds, exemplified by The Tribe Youth Group who sent a delegation to the Full Council meeting in September 2018 to lobby on the issue of single use plastics.
- 2.4 It is in this context of growing interest and concern that the Council moved a resolution in September 2018, to:
1. *Phase out the use of single use plastics by this Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019, and ensure that any single use plastics still in use because of existing contracts have a definite end date for their use.*
  2. *End the sale and provision of single use plastic products, such as bottles, cups, cutlery, drinking straws and food containers, in council buildings.*
  3. *Investigate the possibility of requiring pop-up food and drink vendors at Council events to avoid single use plastics as a condition of their contract.*
  4. *Work with tenants and operators in commercial properties owned by this Council to support the phasing out of single use plastic cups, bottles, cutlery, straws and food containers.*
  5. *Work with event organisers to create policy in which single use disposable plastic cups and glasses are replaced at all city events with reusable or deposit scheme cups and glasses, and that single use plastic food containers are not provided.*
  6. *Investigate what more the Council can do to ensure it recycles more plastic and provides opportunities for businesses and the public to recycle plastic.*
  7. *Bring a report to the Executive Board within 6 months highlighting the progress made.*
- 2.5 In the relatively short time since the resolution was passed, there have been further national pronouncements which continue the momentum to ban or reduce single use plastics in the UK. A good example is the 'UK Plastics Pact' launched by WRAP and the Ellen McArthur Foundation in October 2018. This brings together UK businesses collectively responsible for 80% of packaging passing through UK

supermarkets to commit to eliminate single-use plastic packaging by 2025. At the same time internationally, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's and Nestle were among 250 major brands promising to eliminate all single-use plastics, and to invest in new technology so all packaging can be recycled by 2025.

- 2.6 Governments and parliamentarians were also stepping up their focus on this issue towards the end of last year. The European Parliament approved draft plans to ban single-use plastic items such as plates, cutlery, straws, balloon sticks or cotton buds from the EU market from 2021. Alongside that, several other single-use items for which no alternative currently exists will have to be reduced by member states by least 25% by 2025. The UK Government supports the actions listed in the EU's proposed Directive and has committed to match or, where economically practicable, exceed the Directive's ambition in the UK.
- 2.6 Closer to home, November 2018 saw Leeds University pledge to become single-use plastic free in catering and office spaces by 2020 and in entirety by 2023. Leeds Festival was one of 60 independent festivals to announce late last year a commitment to ban plastic straws and bottles from 2021. This follows the introduction of a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles at the Leeds event in August 2018.
- 2.7 In December 2018, the "Resources and Waste Strategy for England" was published by Defra. A key element of the strategy is support for a circular economy which, in this context, means the sensitive use of finite resources to make products, the repeated reprocessing and reuse in many different forms before final, unavoidable disposal at the point the resource has no further use of any kind.
- 2.8 The immediate priority in the Strategy for 2019 is the reform of waste packaging, with Government committing to work towards all plastic packaging placed on the market being recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025. Subject to consultation this year, a new tax on plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled plastic is also planned for introduction from April 2022. The revenue collected from this and other measures are intended to provide investment for further action to address the issues surrounding single-use plastics, waste and litter in the UK.
- 2.9 The Government has already consulted on banning plastic drinking straws, stirrers and cotton buds and continues to assess the impact of banning other single use plastic items. A commitment has been given to review the latest evidence to further reduce the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products, in line with the commitment to match and where economically practicable, exceed the ambition of the EU in this regard.
- 2.10 Whilst the last few months have seen further movement on this issue, the commitments made in the Council resolution passed in September 2018 remain right and relevant. Work has been progressing across the Council to implement the commitments made, in and amongst this shifting national and international landscape.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 The commitment to phase out the use of single use plastics by the Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019 encompasses a whole range of activities and

products and requires full participation by a wide number of teams and services to ensure it is achieved to greatest effect. A cross-Council group of officers has continued to meet since September 2018 and has included representation from:

- Civic Enterprise Leeds (incl Facilities Management)
- Procurement
- Events Management
- Waste Management Services
- Markets
- Parks and Countryside
- Museums & Galleries

We are currently seeking ways to provide a dedicated resource to co-ordinate this work, which is huge in its impact, opportunity and reach across the Council. This will also improve our ability to interact with and co-ordinate efforts across the city to obvious mutual benefit and to add strength to our collective voice.

- 3.2 Early discussions of the internal group have focussed on what was meant by single use plastics and where they were to be found in use by the Council and its contractors. Questions have been considered such as the inclusion of plastic packaging which is recycled rather than thrown away after one use should still be considered 'single use'. Similarly, whether the plastic components of a structure which has a single use, albeit it of a long duration, should be in or out of scope. Items such as crisp packets and confectionary wrappers not universally regarded as plastic items but which contain plastic elements affecting the degree of reprocessing should also be given due consideration in this work.
- 3.3 Bearing the foregoing comments in mind, a pragmatic approach has been adopted whereby the focus for 2019 will be on plastic items designed and intended for a single use (regardless of whether able to be recycled) and with a typically very short life span. Examples which have therefore been the focus of work thus far include:
- Hot & cold drinks cups
  - Straws and stirrers
  - Plastic bags and bottles
  - Food packaging
  - Disposable cutlery and plates
- 3.4 As work has progressed, several issues and risks have become apparent. These include difficulties in replacing items currently without a suitable 'non-plastic' alternative, or one which carries a worse environmental impact than plastic. There are also licensing and safety issues and additional handling costs to be considered. A good example is the current use of many thousands of plastic 'glasses' at large scale entertainment events hosted by the Council or held at a Council-owned site. The alternatives of ceramic or glass receptacles are not ideal in that such materials simply introduce a number of different issues. Expecting all event attendees to retain one reusable cup to be refilled throughout the event would likely prove unreliable until that practice is more established and familiar (some events organisers are assisting by badging-up bottles etc and therefore adding to their value as a souvenir to be retained and reused). The use of glass at outdoor (and some indoor) events is also prohibited under current licensing conditions. Additional financial and resourcing costs are incurred through the use of multi-use items

specifically through collection, washing and the storage requirements etc. Nevertheless, we can share and learn best practice with other large events organisers such as Leeds Festival, where the ambition to remove all single use plastics is shared.

- 3.5 Other wider commercial / financial implications need to be considered when phasing out all single use plastics by 2019. Until producers of familiar brands transfer to non-plastic packaging, then taken literally, the resolution agreed would require them to be withdrawn from sale at Council hosted events and various concessions from December 2019. So, no Walkers crisps, no Magnum lollies or other popular comestibles that consumers expect and would continue to be able to buy elsewhere. Whereas taking that stance would present some additional financial pressures within the Council, the impact on our smaller scale tenants and operators is likely to be more significant, with some already voicing concern of irrevocable damage to their financial viability.
- 3.6 It has already been noted that the practical context of phasing out single use plastics is changing swiftly and steadily in the right direction to support, enhance and speed up their eventual elimination. The approach recommended to implementing the resolution is therefore to be pragmatic and to work ambitiously whilst incrementally alongside the development of market availability of appropriate alternatives. Whilst the Council has a strong desire to lead the way in terms of a response to the single use plastic agenda, efforts and actions which are out of step with legislative and industry-led measures could have limited benefits or produce unintended negative consequences.
- 3.7 We will work with other local anchor organisations such as Leeds University, in order to amplify the local voice and influence over common suppliers and supply chains in particular. The Government commitment to a new 'plastics tax' on producers by 2022 and to work on all packaging being recyclable or reusable by 2025 together with an increasingly discernible and vocal customer base will help to support momentum in reducing single use plastics generally. Where the benefits of eliminating single use plastics are currently outweighed by other factors, the focus should be on maximising the collection and recycling of that single use plastic. The Council resolution sensibly recognises the contribution of recycling and sensitive disposal of single use plastics alongside efforts to eliminate their use.
- 3.8 There have already been benefits to the cross-Council group of Officers working together to implement the Council resolution. This is being borne out in a better general awareness and knowledge of the 'art of the possible' and constructive challenge and support across services to get to a position where we ultimately no longer see single use plastics in use.

### **Progress on implementing the resolution on phasing out single use plastics.**

- 3.9 The first few months work has already delivered some change in our internal activities and beyond. The fact that we are now proactively questioning both large and smaller scale suppliers and contractors on their use of single use plastics helps to reinforce the expectation of change generally. In doing so, we are adding our voice to that of an increasing number of others seeking similar changes in order to reach the tipping point desired. The following paragraphs provide some specific

advances made in phasing out single use plastics and working with contractors and tenants, five months on from the resolution having been passed.

### 3.9.1 Council-occupied buildings.

In buildings managed by Facility Management such as Merrion House, Civic Hall and St Georges House, single-use plastics for food and drink are no longer being supplied, with alternative arrangements now in place. At Full Council, plastic bottles of water have been replaced by water served in reusable bottles and glasses. All water stations across the estate now offer only drinking glasses and all plastic cups have been removed.

### 3.9.2 Cafes, concessions operated by the Council and misc services.

Officers managing shops and café outlets across the Council are meeting to share ideas and options to remove single use plastics from these outlets. It is planned that all outlets achieve the same level and pace of elimination through mutual support and learning across all sites.

Hot drinks purchased in our museums and galleries use a compostable cup for takeaway purposes, although the majority of customers consume on site. Plastic drinks lids still remain, but are at least recycled if left on site. Straws in these outlets are not routinely offered, but plastic straws have recently been moved to biodegradable materials. Some plastic straws are retained for disabled visitors when requested. Disposable cutlery made of bamboo is available, however standard metal cutlery is the routine offer at these outlets.

Museums and galleries retail cold drinks in aluminium cans and glass to increase choice, however drinks in plastic bottles remain on sale currently. These soft drinks are in PET plastic bottles and are recycled by staff if left on site. All cafes operated by museums and galleries have free access to water jugs and glasses for customers who can therefore avoid purchasing bottled water.

Cafes run by Parks and Countryside such as those at The Arium, Golden Acre Park, Temple Newsam, Lotherton Hall and Tropical World are on track to replace all plastic bags with paper bags and to introduce paper-based takeaway containers for food and drink by Dec 2019. Some plastic bottled drinks have been changed to either glass bottles or cans, both of which can be recycled and in the case of the glass bottles, reused. Bamboo-based coffee cups can be purchased at The Arium, with the plan to roll this out across the remaining four cafes operated by Parks and Countryside throughout the year. There are some products currently which the supplier/manufacturers have no alternative and subsequently have not been replaced as yet.

Within all of the afore-named outlets, only metal cutlery is used for food consumed on site. Work is continuing to replace the current plastic cutlery for takeaway food with a wood based alternative, intended to be in place before the end of 2019.

Leeds City Council's Bereavement Services currently uses over 5000 non-recyclable plastic containers known as 'polytainers' for the retention of ashes following cremations. These will be replaced with a new biodegradable paper based container in future.

### 3.9.3 Events and event venues

For council run venues such as Millennium Square, the Carriageworks and the Town Hall, work is continuing to investigate potential alternatives to plastic 'glasses' used by customers. Licensing and safety requirements currently prevent glasses being used outdoors and / or taken into venue auditoria, therefore the events and venue team are actively looking to introduce compostable / biodegradable drinks containers in place of current plastic cups. The feasibility and success of such change will require the introduction of a process for the collection and disposal of the receptacles.

The events and venue teams will also seek to educate and work with all third party organisations and food & drink operators to support the phasing out of single use plastics including packing, cups, bottles, cutlery, straws and food containers etc.

### 3.9.4 Welfare catering service and commercial catering.

Where Catering Leeds are the provider, work continues to ensure no single use plastics will be used by the meals service provision within schools, early years centres, adult social care homes and the commercial catering arm 'Flavour' by the end of the year. Colleagues are confident in achieving this position.

Activities in Catering to date include the removal of single use yoghurt pots and plastic disposables for staff catering.

In the High School Cafeteria service, Catering staff have met with students to discuss single use plastic and how best to address at very least, its reduced usage here. A range of alternatives are being considered in partnership with schools, with samples of alternatives now sourced.

Buffet trays used within commercial business are starting to be switched to re-usable melamine trays. Also as part of this commercial offer, new individually packaged lunches will contain no single use plastics in their packaging. Compostable and recyclable sandwich and salad boxes are also being trialled to find out which are the most effective for future use.

The use of disposable cups in cafés is being extended and a 'Bring Your Own Cup' scheme introduced at John Charles Café is working well. Consideration is being given to a branded thermal cup being sold at such outlets which could also support 'Flavour' or the venue/service as a marketing/promotion opportunity.

### 3.9.5 Support for 'Refill UK'.

The Council is seeking ways to support the 'Refill UK' scheme. In signing up to this scheme, the Council commits to all of its facilities being 'refill stations' and to therefore provide free water to fill a drinks bottle. We are also exploring ways to support the project more broadly i.e. through links with local businesses via licensing or food business registry. This has included the Refill UK team having met with 'food on the go' market traders to encourage sign-up and time of writing, 25 businesses and 10 Council-run sites have confirmed participation, with many more expected to confirm soon. All of these actions will lead to the reduced demand and use of single use plastic water bottles, which make up such a significant proportion of single use plastics in circulation.



### 3.9.6 Retail & vending outlets operated by the Council

Outlets in Council museums and galleries ceased the purchase of plastic bags in 2016 and instead added paper into the retail options. Existing branded plastic bags for heavy items will continue to be used until current supplies have been used, estimated to be in the spring of 2019. A recycled plastic bag will be trialled for customers choosing that over a paper bag for their purchases.

Shops managed through the Parks and Countryside service are rolling out paper bags for the sale of toys, gifts and other goods in paper bags rather than plastic. The retail sale of such goods is further complicated by the use of shrink wrap or moulded plastic for product protection either in retail or in shipping. Museums and galleries have asked suppliers to consider its reduction and are selecting suppliers who are working towards reducing plastics. A regular dialogue is being maintained with all the retail suppliers on reduction and alternative material sourcing for products within museums and galleries shops. This dialogue needs to be more widespread between suppliers and purchasers across the Council.

A particular challenge exists in the use of vending machines in a range of Council buildings, including sports and leisure facilities. These machines vend food and drink wrapped and contained in single use plastic materials, however their removal means both a reduced offer to customers as well as impacting on income, currently standing at £90k in leisure centres alone. It is unlikely that a vending machine offer would remain commercially viable if filled with products with no single use plastic packaging. This area requires a good understanding of the financial impact of vending operations being included in work to phase out single use plastics whilst ever well-known brands and products remain wrapped in single use plastic. Suppliers such as Walkers crisps are taking what will hopefully be an interim step of introducing deposit return arrangements for crisp packets (of any brand). This serves as an example of the influence of growing consumer demand, meaning food manufacturers can equally ill afford to stand still.

Officers continue to attend a number of trade shows and will continue to raise the elimination of single-use plastics on all occasions. Attendance at such events is also being used to keep abreast of market developments on alternatives available now or imminently, with an understanding of cost implications and true environmental implications. Officers in Waste Services are looking at generic training session for internal services to learn more about the practical and theoretical opportunities and pitfalls in charting a course to eliminate single use plastics in the Council.

### 3.9.7 Influencing and Supporting Council Tenants and Operators.

The Council has now written to all commercial tenants whose business involves the sale of food and drink, to highlight the broad future direction on single use plastics. The resolution commits the Council to work with tenants and operators to support the phasing out of single use plastic cups, bottles, cutlery, straws and food containers. An early step towards this has been a request for tenants and operators to take part in a survey to understand the range and scale of single use plastics in use with a view to giving support and encouragement to reducing that down. This survey has now been sent to tenants who operate food and beverage businesses, including tenants in the Council's markets, Council housing estate shopping parades, parks, leisure centres and other miscellaneous retail properties across the city. Early feedback confirms the unsurprising outcome of some anxiety regarding

the currently unknown and unplanned additional costs to these businesses. The results of the survey in its entirety will shape the support to be given to traders to make improvements in this area. Consideration is being given to the inclusion of a requirement or expectation in letting policies that alternatives to single use plastics are used wherever reasonable and practicable. The Council will not expect tenants to operate above and beyond the current practice and level of elimination achieved across the Council.

### 3.9.8 License holders in the city.

There are 80 premises in the city centre which hold a street café license. From 1st April 2019, the advisory section of the licence will state that all holders of the licence should work to phase out all single-use plastic cups, bottles, cutlery, straws and food containers. Whilst unable to make this a requirement of the licence, it nevertheless gives a clear steer on the direction of travel and the anticipation of support and action in joining the Council and others in phasing out such items in the city. Premises selling alcohol are licensed under the Licensing Act 2003. Specific licensing objectives are in place which cover public nuisance and prevention of crime & disorder etc. and Act does not therefore permit coverage of the removal of single use plastic as a condition of the license. It is also not possible to retrospectively attach new conditions to existing licences. Information will be distributed through channels available such as Pubwatch, to further the elimination of single use plastic items in pubs and clubs etc.

### 3.9.9 'Chartermark' for food and drinks businesses.

The Council has been approached to work with a group of over 20 city centre bar and food businesses to support the introduction of a type of environmental chartermark in the city. This initiative aims to encourage businesses to adopt greener working practices around single-use plastic alternatives and to demonstrate their ethical credentials to customers. Working collaboratively, but led by business, the Council will provide the framework and checks for applicants to apply for this chartermark (yet to be named) expected to be piloted in the Spring. The chartermark will also provide advice on how businesses can operate environmental practices that includes sending no waste to landfill and links to wider schemes such as Refill UK.

### 3.9.10 Recycling more plastic.

The Council has been investigating what more can be done to ensure we recycle more plastic and provide opportunities for businesses and the public to recycle more.

In October 2018, a whole new infrastructure to collect plastic bottles, coffee cups (which contain plastic elements) and cans was introduced as a trial in the city centre in a partnership with the charity 'Hubbub'. This scheme positions a range of bins in retail centres, universities, civic buildings and at various external, street locations. In the first seven weeks of being in operation in civic buildings, this led to 21 bags being filled with coffee cups and therefore able to be diverted for recycling. A trial in a residential area was launched in early 2019.

The partnership has also been trialling recycle reward machines, with one located in Kirkgate Market, where depositors get 10p off purchases from any of the participating 'food to go' stalls in return for their used bottles, cups and cans. Three months in and 7,000 items have been collected through these machines, the majority of which would not have been recycled previously. The market alone recorded 2,000 items collected by January 2019, proving how popular this scheme has been so far.

In addition to items collected 'on the go', the Council of course provides a comprehensive kerbside collection of a broad range of plastics across the City, and is currently carefully considering the future collection of household waste at the kerbside with a view to increasing the rate of this material that is recycled. Whilst the signals within the Resources and Waste Strategy for England are promising in terms of funding to go much further than is currently the case, it is too early to commit in terms of how this might apply specifically to plastics beyond our current offer.

### 3.9.11 Intended next Steps.

The focus of the work internally to date has been on single use plastics associated with the consumption of food and drink. These items represent a significant proportion of the single use plastic that we and our contractors and operators use. The market for these items in alternative materials is more advanced, meaning changes are easier to make, with confidence that the alternative does deliver an environmental benefit. It is recommended that the phasing out of our use of these single use plastic items will remain the focus in 2019. Alongside that this year, we will do more to both support and influence our commercial tenants, operators and event holders to see the eventual elimination of single use plastics in their operations in the city.

The phasing out of single use plastics from our internal use will be broadened beyond food and drink containers etc from 2020 onwards. This work should be in line with the availability of alternatives in the UK together with a good understanding of the cost / benefit of further intended changes. It is envisaged that customer expectations and therefore purchasing behaviour will continue to shift significantly, with producers needing to respond to that and the changing legislative landscape on this issue. We can be confident of securing real improvements in eliminating our use of a wider range of single use plastic items, which should sensibly be planned for implementation beyond December 2019.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 A wide range of services and teams across the Council are engaging with the work to phase out single use plastics in the Council and the supply chain. Interim briefings have been provided for the Executive Member, Environment and Active Lifestyles.

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 There are no equality and diversity / cohesion and integration issues arising from the actions to implement the Council resolution to date.

## **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1 The work to phase out single use plastics is absolutely in line with our Best Council Plan ambitions in reducing consumption and increasing recycling and in being an efficient and enterprising organisation.

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 There are financial risks to withdrawing products which contain single use plastics without then replacing them with similarly attractive and desirable products. In some instances, there is currently no suitable product alternative available on the market. It is recommended that the phasing out of single use plastics by Dec 2019 is undertaken with a full appreciation of the cost/benefit dynamic. Ultimately, it may well be the case that some single use products are recommended to remain in use after 2019, if the financial impact of their with-drawl or replacement is considered too great until a more suitable way forward is achievable, principally through market and product developments.

## **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 A number of areas of risk have been identified as work has progressed to implement the resolution. These include reduced income from sales and a reduced offer to customers of well-known brands and items. The use of alternatives such as glass or ceramic receptacles, especially at large scale events, will incur new handling costs which are currently avoided through disposable, single use products. It is possible that some alternatives to single use plastics will lead to worse environmental impacts. Tenants and operators covered by the resolution are already anxious about the financial impact of the expectation of this change to their products and services.

4.6.2 A pragmatic approach to phasing out single use plastics is recommended to deal with these risks. This should include taking account of the availability, cost and environmental impact of suitable alternatives and removing single use plastics wherever practical to do so. The whole picture of single use plastics is shifting quickly. Not least, consumer demand and legislative changes planned make it reasonable to expect producers to continue to move in the right direction and with some pace now.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Work has been ongoing through a cross-Council group of officers meeting since September 2018 to implement the Council resolution to phase out single use plastics.

- 5.2 There has been real progress with practical changes already implemented as a result of the resolution and as outlined in some detail in this report. The process of bringing officers from a wide range of services and disciplines together to work on this issue has brought benefit in itself. There is now a greater collective awareness and understanding of what can and should be done to eventually eliminate all single use plastics from our estate.
- 5.3 The work to date has identified several risks, especially in working to a timeframe of December 2019. Other organisations nationally and locally have pledged to take action to phase out single use plastics, but are working to a longer timeframe and can therefore benefit from market developments in suitable alternatives. It will be important for work within the Council to continue with a clear eye on both costs and benefits, including those beyond environmental benefits alone.
- 5.4 These issues will also be addressed in the revised Waste Strategy for Leeds which is expected to be considered by the Executive Board in Summer 2019, and through the Council's responses to the current Government consultations on measures to reduce packaging waste which follow on from the recently published Resources and Waste Strategy for England.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 Executive Board are asked to note the work and progress in implementing the Council resolution to phase out single-use plastics by the Council and its supply chain by the end of 2019.
- 6.2 Executive Board are asked to endorse the continuation of a pragmatic and phased approach on the reduction of single use plastics, as outlined in section 3.9.11 of this report.

## **7.0 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None.

---

<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.